(b) how much cotton quota has been Riven to the State for export purposes;

(c) what are the reasons for offering low prices to the cotton growing farmers in Maharashtra under the Monopoly Cotton Purchase Scheme of the State Government which led to agitation; and

(d) how the Central Government propose to help the State Govern ment in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) Government of Maharashtra have requested for export quota of 4 lakh bales in favour of Maharshtra S1(ate Co-opemative Cotton Growers Marketing Federation Ltd.

(b) During the current cotton season, the Maharashtra State Cooperative Cotton Growers Marketing Federation has been allotted 55,000 bales of cotton for export so far.

(c) Under the Cotton Monopoly Procurement Scheme, the Maharashtra S|tatei 'Coopfeartive Cotton Growers Marketing Federation pays guaranteed prices which are at the same level as the minimum support prices fixed by the Government of India. Earlier the Federation was paying guaranteed prices fixed at higer levels than minimum support price level. Hence, the fall in the prices initially paid to the cotton growers in Maharashtra.

(d) The Government of India will release additional cotton quota for export to the State at the appropriate time.

Reopening: of Khokrapur rail route in Ratjasthan

*90. SHRI CHITTA BASU;

SHRI RAMKRISHNA MAZUMDER:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state.

(a) whether there was in-depth discussion between India and Pakistan on the issue of reopening of Khokrapur rail route linking Rajas-than with Sind which had been closed more than 20 years ago;

(b) if so, the result of the discussions held; and

(c) whether andfollow-uD action has since been taken?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI NARAYAN DATT ' TIWAR.I): (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) The decision to reopen the rail route has been taken and the draft agreement to be signed for reopening of the Khokrapur-Muna-bao rail route has been finalised.

(c) The Pakistan Government have been informed that Govern ment is ready to send the Railway delegation to sign the Agreement so that the rait route can be reopened early.

भारत-पाकिस्तान सीमा क्षेत्रों से लोगों का अभिगमन

*91. **डा० बापू कालदाते :**
डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय :

क्या गृह मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि भारत-पाकिस्तान सीमा पर सेनाओं की तैनाती के बाद भारत-पाकिस्तान सीमा पर उत्पन्न तनाव के कारण भारी संख्या में लोग अन्य स्थानों पर जाने लगे हैं ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस संबंध में ब्योरा क्या है ; और

(ग) इस स्थिति का मुकाबला करने के लिए केन्द्र और राज्य सरकारों ने क्या कदम उठाये है?

गृह मंत्री (श्री बूटा सिंह) : (क) से (ग) भारत पाकिस्तान सीमा पर तनाव के परिणामस्वरूप कुछ सीमावर्ती क्षेत्र में रहने वाले काफी लोग जनवरी, 1987 के अंतिम सप्ताह में भीतरी भागों में चल गय थे ।

सीमा पर तनाव को समाप्त कर के लिय भारत और पाकिस्तान के बीच हुए समझौते के बाद इन लोगों न अपने घर को वापस जाना शुरू कर दिया है।

Strengthening of external publicity

92. SHRI KAPIL VERMA;

SHRl DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT:.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps are being taken to revamp our external publicity de-
^ partment set up abroad So as to improve our image abroad and also to project our viewpoints more forcefully on sensitive and important issues; and

(b) whether Government will draft professional hands for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI); (a) The needs of External publicity as an essential and vital adjunct to the implementation of foreign policy, are constantly kept in mind and changes made, as and when necessary.

(b) In the early days of the organisation of External Publicity it was, in fact, professional hands who were hired on contract for the purposes of publicity abroad. These persons were absorbed into the Foreign Service, when they were found fit. It is not considered necessary to draft professional hands again.

However, professional services, such as the Directorate of Audio-Visual Publicity (DAVP) and privately-produced films, are made use of.

Unauthorised agencies sending Indian labour abroad

*93 SHRl BHUVNESH CHATUR-VEDI; Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the existence of unauthori-sed agencies sending Indian labour abroad; and

(b) if so, how many such unauthorised agencies have been identified during the last one year and what action has so far been taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 414 unauthorised agencijes have been identified during the year 1P86 and offences of cheating and fraud have been registered by the Police.

Setting up of nuclear testing facility on Kerguelen Islands by France

*94. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR B1RLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are. aware of the reported French move to set up a nuclear testing facility on Kerguelen Islands in the southern Indian Ocean; and